An Agricultural Land Protection Program for Ontario

A Discussion Paper

Ontario
Ministry of Agriculture and Food

April 1992

An Agricultural Land Protection Program for Ontario

A Discussion Paper

WE WANT YOUR VIEWS

Everyone -- from the producer to the consumer -- has a stake in the protection of our agricultural resources. How we in Ontario protect that resource is the issue at hand.

This discussion paper on agricultural land protection is being circulated for public consultation to know what you think about the issue. The range of options for acting to protect agricutural land is broad. Each option presented in the paper is worthy of consideration.

In response to the reactions received during this consultation, the Province will develop an agricultural land protection program for Ontario. We encourage you to carefully consider the information in this paper. You are invited to attend the public meetings listed in this paper or to send your comments in writing by July 31, 1992 to:

Land Use Planning Branch
Ontario Ministry of Agriculture and Food
801 Bay Street
Toronto, Ontario
M7A 2B2

telephone: (416) 326-3131

Ce document est aussi disponible en français.

92-07639/

TABLE OF CONTENTS

		Page
PART I	**INTRODUCTION**	1
PART II	**COMPONENTS OF PROVINCIAL INTEREST IN AGRICULTURAL LAND**	7
	• Definition of provincially significant agricultural land	7
	• Land uses in agricultural areas	12
	• Severances	14
	• Conversion to other uses	17
PART III	**SUPPORTIVE MEASURES FOR AGRICULTURAL LAND PROTECTION**	20
	• Land trusts	21
	• Conservation easements	24
	• Transfer of development credits	27
	• Cross-compliance	29
	• Further options	31
	• Taxation	31
	• Support programs	32
	• Commission	32
PART IV	**IMPLEMENTATION**	34
	• Tools to express provincial interest	34
	• Roles and responsibilities	37
APPENDIX A	**SCHEDULE OF PUBLIC MEETINGS**	42

PART I

INTRODUCTION

DISCUSSION PAPER PURPOSE AND CONTENT:

The Province of Ontario is committed to the protection of Ontario's agriculture resource base. Public debate on the topic has identified a number of options for proceeding with such protection.

This discussion paper provides information on a number of options for action, recognizing that there may be others which may be identified during the consultation. The paper also poses a number of questions related to these options. The questions will help readers form their respective positions on the options.

This discussion paper will be used in broad public consultation on agricultural land use during 1992. The consultation exercise provides a forum for a full discussion of options for action on agricultural land protection.

The answers to the questions will help to assess the effectiveness and implications of the options. The results of the consultation will be used to develop a provincial program for agricultural land protection.

Part II outlines principal components of a provincial expression of interest in agricultural land: definition of agricultural areas; permitted land uses in agricultural areas; severances; and conversion of agricultural land to other uses.

The options for supportive measures presented in Part III may be used by different levels of government to help facilitate or achieve agricultural land protection. These supportive measures are all optional activities that may not necessarily be implemented.

Part IV of the discussion paper presents implementation options for an agricultural land protection program. Two implementation issues are discussed: tools for implementation

(ie. policy statement or legislation); and provincial and municipal government roles (ie. their relationships and responsibilities).

BACKGROUND:

Protecting the agricultural land base from competing and incompatible uses continues to be a focus of public concern in Ontario. The existing provincial policy regarding agriculture in the land use planning process is the Food Land Guidelines. The Guidelines were released as a statement of government policy on December 11, 1978.

The Planning Act sets out one option whereby the Province may state its interests in agricultural land protection. The Planning Act provides a specific framework and approval process for a policy statement on land use issues. Indeed a draft Foodland Preservation Policy Statement was released for public review in 1986 by the Ministers of Agriculture and Food and of Municipal Affairs.

The need to protect prime agricultural land and to have a policy statement on the matter was widely accepted during the review of the draft Policy Statement. There was, however, a diversity of views on specific proposals in that draft policy statement. There has also been some concern that the review did not sufficiently consider a broad range of options for protecting agricultural land.

There have been a number of changes since the 1986 consultation:

- The agricultural economy continues to experience difficulties, more recently from low commodity prices and high input costs largely due to the effects of international trade agreements and disputes;
- The public's concern for the environment has heightened; and
- Public confidence in the planning system has declined.

This discussion paper and the related consultation focuses on the single aspect of agricultural land use. Matters related to the economics of agriculture continue to be dealt with through other means.

Final recommendations on a program for agricultural land protection from this consultation exercise will be complementary and consistent with the directions coming out of the work of the (Sewell) Commission on Planning and Development reform in Ontario.

The Sewell Commission was appointed in 1991 to make recommendations on the land use planning structure and process. The Commission has released draft planning goals for

public comment. The Commission's broad goals focus on a number of interest areas such as growth management and the environment, including agricultural land protection. The final report of the Commission is due in 1993. Among its recommendations, the Commission may address legislative and other changes needed to restore confidence in the integrity of the land use planning system.

AGRICULTURE IN ONTARIO:

Agriculture represents one of the most important components of Ontario's economy. The 1991 Ontario farm cash receipts amounted to $5.4 billion. The provincial Gross Domestic Product (GDP) for agriculture and directly related industries was $14.6 billion in 1990. Excluding food services, this accounted for over 12 per cent of the total provincial GDP from the production of goods.

Agriculture is dependent upon a suitable land base and climate. In Ontario approximately 11 per cent of the total land area is rated as prime agricultural land (ie. classes 1-4 soils). Half of Canada's class 1 agricultural soils are in Ontario.

Ontario's best agricultural lands are primarily located in the heaviest populated areas of the province. As a result, there is a great deal of pressure to use agricultural land for purposes other than agriculture. There is competition from residential, industrial, commercial, institutional and recreational uses, gravel pits, landfill sites, highways and other such uses.

Changing land uses around Ontario's 26 major urban centres have lead to the conversion of almost 21,000 hectares of rural land from 1981 to 1986. Of this, 83 per cent were classes 1-3 agricultural soils. Agricultural land is also converted around smaller urban centres and through scattered development in rural areas. For example, in 1989 the Ministry of Agriculture and Food received over 14,000 severance applications for review.

These competing uses not only represent a potential loss of agricultural land, but also create a potential for land use conflicts in agricultural areas that may threaten or place restrictions on farm operations. Farmers may be subject to complaints concerning odour, noise, spraying and dust from their operations. As well, farmers may also be subject to problems of trespass, livestock harassment and pilferage and face difficulties with the movement of farm machinery, drainage alterations, and lawsuits.

RELATED CONCERNS:

Agricultural land protection focuses on the protection of the physical resource -- provincially significant agricultural land -- and on avoiding conflict between agriculture and other land uses.

Agricultural land protection, however, is only one facet of a complex of relationships related to land use planning, environmental and resource protection, and community development. Decisions made on any one of these issues will have an impact on the other two. This interdependence must be recognized if development is to be sustained and beneficial overall.

For this reason, several issues need to be considered when making decisions about agricultural land protection:

- Concerns related to the land base, such as fragmentation, cost of land, and soil quality;
- Concerns for the future security of our food supplies, including the price and availability of food;
- Concerns about the present and future vitality of the various sectors of Ontario's agriculture and food industry;
- Concerns about the implication of continuing development of our rural lands: growth management, demands for future municipal services, and cumulative impacts on the environment;
- Concerns about the future vitality of Ontario's farm community, rural municipalities and other rural areas; and
- Concerns about the fiscal outlooks for individual municipalities.

Questions to consider:

What are the costs and benefits of agricultural land protection to the agriculture and food industry?

What are the costs and benefits of agricultural land protection to environmental and resource protection? to community development? to the consumer?

GOALS FOR AN AGRICULTURAL LAND PROTECTION PROGRAM:

There is a need to detail goals for agricultural land protection so that specific options can be identified and assessed. The following proposed goals for agricultural land protection are presented for feedback and comment:

- to protect provincially significant agricultural lands in a long term stewardship perspective;
- to allow for integrated resource and growth management, whereby consideration of rural, settlement and environmental planning issues can deal with land use competition and compatibility; and
- to support partnership arrangements for rural community development.

The future provincial agricultural land protection program will be developed in response to these goals, as modified through this consultation process, and in response to given resources and abilities.

> Discussion question on goals:
>
> What are your views on the above-stated goals for an agricultural land protection program?

EVALUATION CRITERIA:

To help assess options for a provincial agricultural land protection program, the following evaluation criteria are proposed:

- Protection of prime agricultural areas
  Does the option identify specialty crop areas and other prime agricultural areas to be protected?

- Prevention of land use conflicts
  Does the option limit or control the range of uses permitted in prime agricultural areas and the ability to change land uses to incompatible land uses?

- Degree of permanence
  Is there certainty that provincially significant agricultural land will remain available for agricultural use?

- Comprehensiveness
  Is the option an integrated approach to agricultural land use planning; does the option acknowledge other resource and planning interests; does the option meet the objectives of economic renewal and environmental sustainability?

- Ease of implementation
  Can the option be implemented by using existing resources and expertise; does it entail a low degree of complexity?

- Timing
  Can the option be readily implemented; does it achieve quick results and visibility?

- Acceptability
  Is the option acceptable to farmers, municipalities and others; does it address concerns expressed by these groups?

- Costs
  Will the option incur low implementation and other administrative costs; does it have little negative long-term effect on the agriculture and food industry?

- Compatibility
  Can the option operate effectively alongside other land use planning and financial programs?

PART II

COMPONENTS OF PROVINCIAL INTEREST IN AGRICULTURAL LAND

INTRODUCTION:

The basic components of provincial interest in agricultural land protection will include:

- a definition of provincially significant agricultural land;
- a definition of what land uses may be permitted on provincially significant agricultural land;
- a policy on severances on provincially significant agricultural land; and
- a policy on land conversion to other uses in a context of growth management.

The following sections provide a discussion on these topics, and in several cases, identify options.

DEFINITION OF PROVINCIALLY SIGNIFICANT AGRICULTURAL LAND:

One of the initial issues to be determined for any policy is the extent of its application -- be it in terms of eligibility, coverage, or other criteria.

In this regard, any provincial declaration on agricultural land protection will need to state which rural lands are provincially significant for agriculture. Lands identified as provincially significant for agriculture will be subject to the policies developed for the agricultural land protection program.

A provincial statement on agricultural significance may not account for local perceptions. For example, additional lands may be viewed as locally or regionally significant for agriculture by local municipalities, but because of not meeting the provincial definition these lands may not be adequately protected.

Any number of factors can be used to identify provincially significant agricultural lands, for example:

- soil capability for agriculture which considers the type of soil limitation for agriculture and the degree of limitation,
- climate,
- site characteristics (eg. current land use, vegetation, other natural resources),
- location characteristics (eg. surrounding land uses, accessibility),
- land tenure patterns (eg. fragmentation), and
- existing development controls (eg. zoning bylaws).

Question to consider:

What factors help to identify provincially significant agricultural land? Why?

These factors can be used in different ways to identify provincially significant agricultural lands. Three examples as presented below; two are single criteria approaches: soil capability and current land use, and the third is a land evaluation approach. Each approach results in different rural lands being identified as provincially significant agricultural lands (although some lands will be common to each).

Soil capability approach:

The *soil capability approach* to defining and identifying which lands are to be subject to agricultural protection is based on soil mapping. The most common source of such mapping is the 1:50,000 scale of mapping from the Institute of Pedology. More detailed soil mapping for specific sites can be done by soil science consultants.

Each soil type can be rated for its capability for agriculture. In Canada, the most widely accepted rating system is the Canada Land Inventory, which assigns one of seven capability classes to each soil type.[1] Separate information is provided on the suitability

[1] The Canada Land Inventory soil capability classification for agriculture is an interpretive classification. This classification groups mineral soils, which have similar limitations for agriculture, into one of 7 classes. Classes 1 to 3 are considered to be suitable for sustained production of common field crops. Class 4 is marginal for sustained production of common field crops. Class 5 is capable for use only for permanent pasture and hay, whereas Class 6 can be used only for wild pasture. Class 7 has no capability for pasture and hay nor common field crops. The

of the soils for specialty crops as well. The actual lands to be protected for agriculture are determined by their soil class.

The Food Land Guidelines have defined prime agricultural lands as being comprised of specialty crop lands and lands rated predominantly classes 1, 2, 3 and 4 soils for agriculture as defined by the Canada Land Inventory. Smaller pockets of marginal soils (eg. classes 5, 6 and 7 soils) may be included as prime agricultural lands. This occurs in recognition of their use as part of the overall farm enterprise and in order to establish a large area in which agriculture can occur without conflict. The intent is to prevent non-farm uses from locatiing near farm operations or related farm practices.

The Guidelines recognize that not all specialty class lands nor classes 1-4 soils can be, nor should be, included in establishing an agricultural designation in an official plan. Some areas that are significantly affected by scattered non-farm development have limited long-term significance for agricultural activity. These areas may not be included as part of an agricultural area in municipal official plans.

The Guidelines attempt to establish an area for agricultural activity that is as uninterrupted as possible by incompatible and/or competing land uses. In this way, agricultural activities can occur broadly and without potential conflict with other land uses.

An alternative to the area approach of the Food Land Guidelines is to exclude pockets of poor soils within areas of high capability soils as lands of no provincial significance. Under this approach, poor quality soils are defined. Wherever such poor pockets are identified, those lands are not be part of the area protected for agriculture and the lands are not be subject to the provincial agricultural protection program. While such poor pockets may be an integral part of an agricultural enterprise, they are not recognized as provincially significant for agriculture under the poor pocket approach. Therefore, an agricultural operation with variable soils may find that only part of its lands are considered as provincially significant agricultural lands.

The principal difference between the Food Land Guidelines area approach and the poor pocket approach is that under the poor pocket approach there is more emphasis on site planning, rather than area planning, and there is no regard to farming systems.

Canada Land Inventory system does not account for current use and existing management practices. For specialty crop lands (eg. for fruit and vegetables), a system of specialized suitability ratings has been developed.

Questions to consider:

What classes of soil comprise provincially significant agricultural lands?

How small a pocket of non-agricultural land should be recognized as being not provincially significant?

Current use approach:

Another approach to identifying provincially significant agricultural lands is the *current use approach*. Under this approach, provincial agricultural significance is determined solely by the current use of the land. That is to say, only those lands currently in active agricultural use are provincially significant agricultural lands. Implementation of this approach occurs through site-by-site inspection.

Criteria would be established for identifying agricultural lands, including recognizing land that is intentionally left as fallow (eg. in a crop rotation system) or as pasture. Woodlands as part of a farm operation, for such purposes as maple syrup production, nut harvest, firewood production, and soil and water conservation, would also be assessed.

The intent of the current use approach is to recognize only those lands used for agricultural production as being provincially significant agricultural lands. This approach is very much based on management activities and practices of a current owner and disregards future intentions. This approach also does not assess the capability of the land for agricultural production nor the ability to bring the land into active agricultural use.

Questions to consider:

How many years should land be idle before it can be considered to be no longer provincially significant for agriculture?

Should such an approach to identifying provincially significant agricultural lands be applied on a farm-by-farm basis? Why?

Land evaluation approach:

Various jurisdictions in North America have adopted systems which assess several criteria together in order to identify lands to be protected as agricultural. Such a *land evaluation approach* may include the following criteria:

- soil capability,
- site characteristics (eg. vegetation, other natural resources),
- location characteristics (eg. surrounding land uses, land fragmentation, road access), and
- existing development controls (eg. bylaws).

Frequently, a score is assigned for each factor considered under the land evaluation approach. The actual score given to a site or property depends on its characteristics. The total points for all factors give the over-all score for a site's agricultural significance and/or development potential. Provincial significance is determined by how the site compares to a pre-determined score for provincial significance.

This approach recognizes that physical capabilities of a site are only one consideration in establishing agricultural areas and that other criteria must be considered. When more criteria are included in the assessment, the land evaluation system becomes more complex. As the complexity of the system increases, the resources needed to identify and evaluate each of the factors and to map agricultural areas becomes more difficult; smaller and smaller site-specific evaluations also need to be done.

The land evaluation approach eliminates some of the subjectivity in evaluating the agricultural significance of land. As well, the specific scores on the different factors indicate what impacts the proposed development may have on agriculture. For example, scores on soil quality will indicate what soil is being converted and scores regarding surrounding uses will indicate the impact on farm operations.

Questions to consider:

What factors should be used in defining provincially significant agricultural lands?

What values should be set for these factors in determining whether an area or site is provincially significant for agriculture?

How small of an area should be recognized through this process?

Should the total score for an area or site be rigorously applied against a provincial standard?

Discussion questions for defining significant agricultural areas:

Which rural lands should be protected for agriculture?

Which of the approaches for defining agricultural areas would best help to protect agricultural lands and operations?

Should only one, consistent approach be used throughout the province? What variations may be appropriate?

Regardless of which approach is used for identifying provincially significant agricultural lands, are there regional differences that should be acknowledged? What are these differences?

LAND USES IN AGRICULTURAL AREAS:

Once an agricultural area has been identified for protection, basic protection of the land and operations in the area is achieved by specifying which land uses may be permitted in the area. The specific range of land uses permitted in agricultural areas is determined on the basis of various goals:

- to limit the conversion of agricultural lands for non-agricultural uses,
- to avoid land uses incompatible with agricultural operations and farm practices,
- to provide stability in the area for long-term investment in agriculture,
- to ensure the continued vitality of the agricultural community, etc.

Some land uses, by their very nature, may be permitted land uses; for example, all agricultural enterprises and related principal farm residences. Other land uses may also be permitted because of their compatibility with agricultural operations and farm practices: woodlots, conservation areas, wetlands, and wildlife management areas.

Other land uses may be more or less incompatible with agricultural operations and farm practices. In some cases, the scale of a land use determines whether it is incompatible with agriculture. For example, home occupations carried out within existing residences and cottage industries may be viewed as being compatible. For these situations, the non-agricultural use is small scale and can readily be carried out or subsequently relocated without any lingering impact on surrounding agricultural operations.

For other land uses, the scale and nature of the activity make them incompatible with agriculture. For example, the Food Land Guidelines do not include the following as permitted uses within prime agricultural areas: non-farm residential, commercial, and industrial development, agri-business uses that do not need to be in close proximity to an agricultural operation, community institutional uses (eg. schools, churches), public facilities and utilities and recreational uses. Rather, the Guidelines recommend that alternative locations be found for these uses in urban centres or on marginal or poorer agricultural land.

Discussion questions on land uses:

What factors (including values for these factors) should be considered in determining which land uses to permit on provincially significant agricultural land?

What land uses should be permitted on lands identified as provincially significant agricultural lands?

What land uses should not be permitted on lands identified as provincially significant agricultural lands?

SEVERANCE POLICIES:[2]

There are five approaches for severances in agricultural areas: agriculturally-related severances, severance quotas, severances in infilling situations, severances on poor pockets and no severances. The first four are discussed below.

Severances have implications for municipal services and finances and must be considered in terms of any growth management strategies or policies. The different approaches outlined below will have different implications not only because of the numbers that may be granted under any one approach, but also because of their location. Scattered residential development has the potential for increased instances of conflict with adjacent uses and natural resources. It is generally more costly to provide services. There is also the issue of cumulative impact on natural resources and the environment.

Lot size, the existing stock of vacant rural lots, and development opportunities elsewhere should also be considered in determining severance policies.

Agriculturally-related severances:

Agriculturally-related severances include those that are related to and supportive of agricultural operations. The Food Land Guidelines currently allows for the following farm-related severances: residential lot for full-time farm help, residential lot for a retiring farmer, splits of existing farm properties into smaller viable and flexible units, and severing a farm residence that has become surplus as a result of farm consolidation. Other types of farm-related severances may include creation of lots for farm-related industrial and commercial uses.

Most municipalities have adopted policies for these severances into their official plans. Local official plans often provide additional criteria for assessing eligibility for a proposed agriculturally-related severance.

Surveys have indicated that agriculturally-related residential severances in most cases become non-farm residential properties relatively soon after creation.

---

[2] Severance refers to the separation of a parcel of land from an existing parcel, in order to sell or mortgage it, or in order to lease it for more than 21 years.

Questions to consider:

What types of severances may appropriately be labelled agriculturally-related?

Do agriculturally-related severances need to be on provincially significant agricultural land?

Who should be able to apply for an agriculturally-related severance?

What factors should be established for each type of agriculturally-related severance (eg. minimum lot size, maximum lot size, distance from livestock facilities, retiring farmer, time limit for building)? What values should be set for these factors?

Severance quotas:

Another approach to severances in rural areas is to limit them according to a quota. Quotas could be established for the municipality as a whole (eg. annual quotas) or a quota could be assigned to each property. A property quota approach may set density limits according to size of property (eg. one severance for every 40 hectares) or limits according to frequency of severance (eg. one severance every 10 years). Usually quota approaches are for residential severances only.

Only a few jurisdictions have a quota approach to severances. But even for some of these, any permitted severance must also be farm-related.

Questions to consider:

What factors (eg. frequency, density, applicant, site) should apply to a quota approach for severances? What values should be set for these factors?

Infilling severances:

Some official plans recognize the impact of non-agricultural severances on existing farm operations and practices. In some situations, however, a municipality may permit limited non-agricultural severances. Criteria are frequently established to determine eligibility

for an infilling severance. A maximum distance between existing buildings is the criterion most often used.

Questions to consider:

What factors should be used to permit infilling severances in agricultural areas? What values should these factors have?

What is the maximum number of lots that should be permitted by infilling in agricultural areas?

What types of land uses should be permitted on infilling severances?

How do municipalities avoid strip development in agricultural areas?

"Poor pocket" approach:

Regardless of the approach used to define provincially significant agricultural areas, there will be pockets on land within most larger properties that will be seen as having a lower value for agriculture than the other land. The lower value may be due to the a pocket's agricultural capability (ie. class of soil) or its location and accessibility to the rest of the property.

These pockets of lower value are sometimes discounted to such a degree by their owners that they are seen to be natural candidates for severance from the remainder of the property.

Questions to consider:

What land uses should be permitted on "poor pocket" severances?

What factors (eg. applicant, minimum size of pocket, size of total holding, distance from livestock facilities) should be used to determine eligibility for severance of "poor pockets" in agricultural areas? What are the values for these factors?

Discussion questions on severances:

Should severances be permitted in provincially significant agricultural areas? Who should decide?

What limits or restrictions should there be on severances in provincially significant agricultural areas? For example, what types of severances are appropriate? Are quotas per property or per land owner appropriate? Who should be eligible for severances in agricultural areas?

What costs and benefits do severances in provincially significant agricultural areas have on agricultural operations? On farm practices? On municipalities?

What advantages and disadvantages are there with each type of severance approach discussed above?

CONVERSION OF AGRICULTURAL LAND TO OTHER USES:

Major public concern has frequently been expressed about urban expansions on prime agricultural lands. The urban sprawl of the Greater Toronto Area is but one example where this concern has been noted.

In addition to the expansion of major urban centres, there is also the growth of smaller communities and the establishment of non-agricultural uses on agricultural lands. These non-agricultural uses include scattered residential, commercial, and industrial development, aggregate extraction, recreational uses, and various public uses (including transportation and waste management).

Such growth and development is considered by municipalities during official plan reviews and through amendments to existing official plans. In doing so, municipalities give consideration to the needs of their communities for the future (eg. residential, industrial and commercial requirements) and respond to development proposals from individuals. Concerns about conversion of rural land is also raised during municipal boundary adjustments (ie. annexations), which precede land use planning decisions.

Conversion of prime agricultural land has impacts on:

- the amount and productivity of agricultural land in the province;

- the ability to farmers to carry out their normal farm practices adjacent to other uses; and
- the price of land for agricultural purposes.

In order to ensure that agricultural land conversions are thoroughly examined, the Food Land Guidelines have established a justification approach in which municipalities are asked to provide documentation to justifying the decision. The justification is based on a detailed analysis of municipal needs for the planning period (usually up to 20 years into the future), taking into account existing vacant land and forecasted demand. The current process also requires municipalities to consider converting marginal or poorer agricultural lands before approving the conversion of prime agricultural lands.

A simplified alternative could be developed for the future. Urban expansion proposals could be assessed against a provision that municipalities have a specified minimum area designated (and undeveloped) at all times for certain urban uses (eg. for residential and industrial development).

Any redesignation of agricultural lands for other uses is made in the context of growth management. Strategies and policies for managing growth address such issues as the form and direction of non-agricultural development. Consideration of these issues has direct effect on the rate and location of agricultural land conversion. Similarly, an agricultural land protection program may have implications for non-agricultural development in terms of restricting it in some locations and directing it to other areas.

Discussion questions on conversion of land use:

What criteria should be applied to the conversion of provincially significant agricultural land:

- what agricultural land should be protected?
- what non-agricultural land uses should be permitted to convert agricultural land?
- where should conversion of agricultural land be permitted (eg. only adjacent to existing communities)?

What maximum time frame is appropriate for assessing future development needs of a municipality?

What minimum areas (hectares or percentage) of undeveloped land are reasonable for municipalities to have set aside for future development?

PART III

SUPPORTIVE MEASURES FOR AGRICULTURAL LAND PROTECTION

INTRODUCTION

The following sections present several examples of supportive measures that could be used to protect agricultural land. Once the goals and policies for agricultural land have been developed, these tools could help achieve the goals.

A program for agricultural land protection could include one or several of these supportive measures. Some of the measures, such as the transfer of development credits and cross-compliance measures, might be more limited in their application than others. The Government wants to consider the measure or combination of measures that would work best for protecting agricultural land.

For each measure, examples are given. These show how other provinces and states have used the measure to protect agricultural land and other resources. The implications of using each measure in Ontario are also discussed. Finally, some advantages and limitations are presented for each measure.

LAND TRUSTS

A land trust is a non-profit charitable organization that works to protect significant land and natural features. These organizations are usually private or quasi-governmental. They focus on protecting natural heritage areas, agricultural lands, open space, and cultural and heritage features. For the purposes of this discussion paper, a land trust's main functions include buying and managing land, and running programs to protect land and features.

Example:

Three basic models exist to describe the ways trusts work.

In Britain, the National Trust is a non-governmental organization that buys historic land and buildings. The Trust owns over 500,000 acres and several thousand buildings. It manages some of them for public use. Buying and managing historic and natural properties are its main activities. It funds its work through donations, leasing properties to farmers and tenants, and charging admission to its buildings.

In the United States, most trusts are private non-governmental organizations that buy and manage significant land and buildings. However, many trusts also use other techniques to protect property, which are beyond the scope of this section but are discussed elsewhere in the paper. For example, several land trusts buy property, place restrictions on its use on title, and resell the land. Others also have conservation easement agreements with owners of significant lands. These two methods help them protect land without having to manage it.

Funding comes from several sources. People donate both land and money to trusts. The resale of properties provides money for further land deals. Some trusts also qualify for money under special state programs.

Some Canadian provinces, including Ontario, follow a third model. Government agencies (e.g. the Ontario Heritage Foundation) have been established to acquire significant historical or natural heritage properties through purchases or donations. The Ontario Heritage Foundation relies on government funding and donations to do its work. It buys important heritage properties to ensure they remain intact and unchanged.

Application to Ontario:

The Province could establish a trust organization and program similar to the Ontario Heritage Foundation to protect agricultural lands. The Province also could extend the mandate of the Ontario Heritage Foundation to include agricultural lands.

As another option, the Government could encourage private land trusts at both the provincial and regional level to protect agricultural land. Trusts aimed only at protecting agricultural land would be more effective than those concerned with several resources. Private trusts could identify and protect lands of local and regional priority more easily.

In order to make private trusts viable, they must be able to offer some benefit to their donors. If a trust is registered as a charity, it could issue tax receipts to donors. Trusts could also lease their lands to farmers to raise additional funds.

Advantages:

Ownership provides the strongest land protection. Once an agricultural land trust owns property, it is relatively secure and will likely remain in agriculture. This depends on the management and strength of the trust organization.

Private trusts would allow concerned individuals to play a role in protecting agricultural lands. The role of Government need not be as great.

Local trusts build local support. They can be an effective tool for community development, building community self-reliance and autonomy. This may contribute to their success.

Limitations:

The effectiveness of agricultural land trusts would be limited by their funding and by the willingness of individuals to donate land and money.

A land trust program could be very costly, as it entails the purchase of properties.

Trusts would protect fewer properties than some other methods with the same budget. For example, the money used to buy one property might pay for conservation easements on several properties.

Questions to consider:

What features would be necessary for you to consider putting your land in a trust?

Would you invest in, or be involved in a land trust?

What rights and powers should trusts have?

How should trusts be funded?

CONSERVATION EASEMENTS

A conservation easement is a contract between a landowner and another party. The contract limits the development of property to certain specified uses which are less than those permitted under existing zoning by-laws. The person or organization holding the easement compensates the owner for the limitation. This restriction is usually registered on title for the property. The concept of conservation easements is similar to easements related to pipelines and utility corridors.

Example:

Easements for utilities limit the development of land and construction on the utility corridor. Easement agreements also allow the holder of the easement to gain access to the property. In agricultural areas, land under such easements may still be farmed or used by the owner. The landowner is compensated for the restrictions applied by the easement.

The Ontario Heritage Act provides another example of easements. The Act enables municipalities and the Ontario Heritage Foundation to hold easements to protect heritage buildings and properties. Property owners agree to maintain their buildings and properties for heritage purposes. Currently, no other agency or group in Ontario has the ability to enter into easement agreements for preservation purposes.

Several American states use conservation easements (or the purchase of development rights) to preserve agricultural land. The State of Maryland started a conservation easement program for agriculture in 1977. Funds were allocated through a bond issue and the Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation was formed to administer the program. Farmers voluntarily form agricultural districts of 100 acres or more. Once the County and the Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation approve the district, farmers may offer easements on their land.

Applicants for easements offer their development rights to the Foundation, asking a specific price. The Foundation only considers those applicants approved by the County for easement purchases. This allows the counties to set priorities for protecting their land.

The Foundation has the value of each proposed easement appraised. It then ranks applicants according to their bids. The Foundation offers to purchase easements on those properties with the lowest bids, continuing until all available funds have been allocated.

Once an easement agreement is completed, the landowner may only use the land for agricultural purposes. The easement lasts for 25 years, after which the landowner may buy back the easement. A request to buy back the easement requires the approval of the County and the Foundation.

Application to Ontario:

A conservation easement program for agricultural land similar to the program for heritage properties could be established. Such a program could enable the province, municipalities and/or private conservation organizations to enter into an easement agreement with farmers. The program would have to set conditions and standards for easement agreements.

The system in Maryland allows counties and the Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation to identify priority areas for land protection through easements. An easement program in Ontario might have geographic options (e.g. a specific area, or as an urban separator), commodity options (e.g. specialty crops) or broader options (e.g. resource lands). Such targeting might increase the effectiveness of the program.

Advantages:

An easement provides more certain protection than some other methods such as designation and zoning.

Easements cost less than purchasing property.

There would be a general degree of acceptance because of the voluntary nature of an easement program.

Through conservation easements, the general public contributes to the protection of the agricultural resource.

Limitations:

Such an approach is relatively expensive. This would limit their scope and application to selected areas.

Because easements are voluntary agreements, the program would depend on landowners to initiate actions to protect their land. Land under the greatest pressure for development may not be offered by its owners.

Questions to consider:

What kinds of features would have to be in place for you to consider a conservation easement on your land?

Who should pay for such a program?

TRANSFER OF DEVELOPMENT CREDITS

The transfer of development credits involves applying development opportunity (i.e. density) from one property to another. Under such a program, farmers would be issued certain tradeable development credits. The number of credits a farmer receives would depend on the area of land in agricultural production. The farmer could sell these credits to a developer. The developer could then apply them to another property in an identified receiving area. This would increase the density of development in the identified area.

Example:

Several American jurisdictions have related programs in place, usually referred to as transfer of development rights. These programs were usually developed as states or local municipalities placed more restrictive zoning on farmland. The transfer process has been used as a way of obtaining acceptance for new, more restrictive agricultural zoning.

Montgomery County, Maryland, established such a transfer of development rights system. The County placed agricultural land in a Rural Density Transfer Zone. This restricts landowners to developing one house per 25 acres. However, landowners may sell development rights at the rate of one house per 5 acres. Transferred rights can only be used for residential development.

The County also identified receiving areas (in nearby built-up areas), or Rural Cluster Zones, through a public decision-making process. Developers who purchase farmers' development rights may transfer the rights to land in this zone. This allows higher density levels than the County would otherwise approve.

Application to Ontario:

The planning and local government systems and legal framework in Ontario differ from the systems in most American states. In Ontario, owners of agricultural land would have to be assigned credits which could be sold by them. These development credits would not increase the development potential of agricultural land. Rather, the credits could be bought by developers and applied to other developable sites in identified receiving areas.

A transfer of development credits program for agricultural lands would likely be limited to within local, county or regional municipalities. Municipalities would have to identify receiving areas to which development credits could be transferred.

Advantages:

Transfer of development credits requires little or no expenditure by the municipality or the province, as the developer pays the cost of purchasing the development credits.

Such a program reinforces the principle of developing in existing settlement areas, and would reduce the pressure on agricultural lands.

Limitations:

The transfer of development credits across municipal boundaries presents difficulties for administering the program. Also, transfers could result in the loss of potential tax revenue for a rural municipality.

A registry system to record the transfers that take place is needed. It would take some time to initiate this system.

Finding communities willing to receive increased density may be difficult.

Questions to consider: Could such a program work in Ontario? How could it be done?

CROSS-COMPLIANCE IN PROGRAM CRITERIA

Cross-compliance means the addition of qualifying criteria or performance requirements related to agricultural land protection, to the qualifications for support under another provincial program. For instance, agricultural zoning may be a condition to qualify for a support program. Cross-compliance may take many forms. Requirements to protect agricultural lands could be included with any program.

Example:

New York state enacted its Agricultural Districts Law in 1971. Under this legislation, landowners voluntarily form agricultural districts. Individual properties must be at least 10 acres in size, and the land must produce a minimum of $10,000 annually, on average for the preceding two years. The farmer commits to keeping the land in agricultural production.

In return, farmers' lands are assessed based their productive capacities. This reduces the property tax burden for farmers. The Law also prohibits local governments from enacting new by-laws or ordinances which would unreasonably restrict or regulate farm structures or farming practices. As a third benefit, the legislation restricts assessments for local improvements, such as water or sewer, to a one-half acre lot surrounding farm structures that directly benefit from the improvement.

California has similar legislation in place. Farmers may be eligible for reductions in their property taxes if they agree to place their land in agricultural preserves. Farmers enter into restrictive contracts with the state for an initial period of ten years. The contracts restrict the use of these lands to agriculture.

Once the farmer agrees to the contract, he receives a differential assessment for his property. The state bases the tax on the use value rather than the market value of the land. The state applies a penalty to the farmer if he wants to cancel the contract before the ten years have passed.

Application to Ontario:

The Ontario Government runs several programs to support the agricultural sector. Conditions could be added to program qualifications to encourage the protection of agricultural lands. The government may ask farmers to commit to preserving their land for agriculture to get certain tax or program benefits.

As an Ontario example, changes could be made to the current property assessment and taxation process. The Farm Tax Rebate Program currently provides farmers with a 75% rebate on property taxes for qualified farmland. Properties must be assessed as farms and they must have been in agricultural production for the taxation year, among other conditions. This program has no requirement about the zoning of the land. The Province could require farmland to be zoned as agricultural in order to qualify for the rebate.

Advantages:

This measure could be effective in all parts of the province.

Establishing cross-compliance could involve little or no additional expenditure.

Limitations:

Depending on the requirements established for cross-compliance, the effect of such a measure may only last a short time.

Cross-compliance requirements may reduce participation in programs which, on their own, benefit agriculture.

Questions to consider:

What linkages are reasonable under a cross-compliance program to protect agricultural land?

What programs should have the protection of agricultural land as an eligibility criterion?

FURTHER OPTIONS

Other options for supportive measures exist. These include:

- taxation programs,
- support programs,
- a commission charged with protecting agricultural lands.

These measures differ somewhat from the first four measures discussed above. Each of these measures could take several different forms. Other jurisdictions have used each of these measures in many different ways to protect agricultural land. Because of the flexibility of these measures, they are presented in a different way than the others.

TAXATION:

Taxation offers several ways to support agricultural land protection initiatives. Some provinces and states assess farms for property tax purposes on the basis of use value, rather than market value. This approach may be especially effective on lands closer to urban centres, where development pressures force up market values of land. With lower tax rates, farmers may not feel the pressure to sell their land as much.

Another taxation tool is the use of tax credits. Tax credits may be given to farmers, based on income levels and property tax levels. In this way, local municipalities do not bear the cost of farmland protection.

Some jurisdictions have introduced land speculation taxes. These taxes apply to the gains made on the sale of land. The level of the tax usually decreases the longer a property remains with one owner. A variation of such a tax is a conversion tax when agricultural land is sold for development.

The Provincial Fair Tax Commission, as part of its mandate, will examine several tax issues that affect farmers, the agricultural sector and other landowners. The Commission is examining property taxes and land speculation taxes among other issues.

SUPPORT PROGRAMS:

Many existing provincial support programs have an economic aim. That is, they are intended to increase the returns from farming operations. The Ministry of Agriculture and Food could introduce programs which more directly support the goal of protecting prime agricultural land.

When farmers agree to maintain their land as farmland, they give up potential profits that could arise from selling the land. A program could be developed to pay farmers who agree to keep their land in agricultural production.

Other non-financial programs could support the aim of protecting farm land. Programs could also be developed that strengthen communities and give them tools to protect resources like agriculture. A community development program might support agricultural land protection while it strengthens the local economy.

COMMISSION:

A commission could be established with its sole purpose being agricultural land protection. Depending on its specific powers, such an agency may simply review development proposals as part of the existing planning approvals process. It might also have a stronger role as the final approval authority for agricultural lands placed in reserves. Alternatively, it could act as an appeal body on matters of agricultural land use.

Both British Columbia and Quebec have established commissions to administer their systems of agricultural land reserves. The commissions are responsible for agricultural reserves. They decide which lands should be included within the reserves and what types of uses should be permitted. Their roles and responsibilities are similar to those of the Niagara Escarpment Commission in Ontario.

Questions to consider:

What changes or additions to taxation programs could be made to assist in protecting agricultural land?

What changes or additions to support programs could the government make to assist in protecting agricultural land?

Should a commission be established to protect agricultural lands? What should be its mandate?

What other methods might be effective in protecting agricultural land?

Discussion questions on supportive measures:

The following questions apply to all of the supportive measure options discussed in this part. These questions ask you to compare all of the suggested measures. As the introduction to this part states, one or several of these measures could be used in a program to protect agricultural land. The questions are intended to prompt discussion on what might be the most effective combination of supportive measures.

1. How does each supportive option achieve the draft goals for agricultural land protection proposed in Part I?

2. How does each option measure against the evaluation criteria proposed in Part I?

3. How would you rank or compare the various options in terms of their effectiveness and feasibility?

PART IV

IMPLEMENTATION

INTRODUCTION

Successful implementation of policies relies on partnerships among landowners, developers, interest groups, professionals and all levels of government. Beginning a partnership early in policy development can achieve:

- understanding of the issues,
- acceptance of the policy tools, and
- attainment of the goals.

There are several aspects to consider in putting an agricultural land protection program in place. The goals and basic policies must be decided. They then may be expressed in a policy statement or in legislation. The focus of the policy statement or law could range from a narrow concentration on agricultural land protection alone, to a broader focus on several matters of provincial interest, including agricultural land protection.

The final section of the discussion paper seeks input on the future roles and relationships of the different levels of government in implementing an agricultural land protection program.

TOOLS TO EXPRESS PROVINCIAL INTEREST

Policy statements and legislation can have the same purpose. They both can express provincial goals and policy. However, the two mechanisms differ in their form, their administration, and their relationship to the land use planning system and other issues.

A third tool, education, could be used by the government in combination with either a policy statement or legislation. Education would involve informing people about the

chosen policies. It could also involve enlightening people to the need for and benefits of protecting agricultural lands. Education supports the implementation of the policies and helps in achieving the goals for agricultural land protection.

The following discussion outlines the basic differences between policy statements and legislation. Possible variations in the focus for each are also discussed.

Policy Statements

The land use planning system established by the Planning Act addresses various issues and concerns related to land use, resource development and growth management. Section 3 of the Planning Act allows the Minister of Municipal Affairs, alone or with another Minister, to issue a policy statement. Policy statements deal with matters of provincial interest in land use planning. The policies outline the Province's concerns about an issue or resource.

Once the Province has approved a policy statement, the Planning Act requires all those involved in land use planning "to have regard to" its goals and policies. Once approved, a policy statement is administered in conjunction with existing planning policies and legislation. To date, three policy statements have been approved: Mineral Aggregate Resources (1986); Flood Plain Planning (1988); and Land Use Planning for Housing (1989).

A policy statement on agricultural land use might only cover the issue of agricultural land protection. This has been Ontario's approach for many years through the Food Land Guidelines.

The Food Land Guidelines outline current provincial policy on planning for agriculture in Ontario. The Guidelines help decision makers and landowners identify prime agricultural areas. Decision makers also receive direction on permitted uses, land severances and policies dealing with the conversion of agricultural land to non-agricultural uses. The Guidelines focus only on agricultural land use, identification and protection.

There could be a policy statement with a broader focus encompassing an integrated vision for planning. Such a vision would co-ordinate various provincial interests such as resource and environmental protection, and growth management. Agricultural land protection would be one part of such a vision. In this way, the government could deal with the interrelationships among provincial interests.

The government could identify several interests in one policy statement. Such a policy statement would address the linkages among these interests. It might also establish a process for resolving conflict among the various interests.

Several models for planning also suggest a more integrated approach to decision making. An ecosystem approach to planning recognizes the interactions and relationships among air, land, water and living organisms; the built environment interacts with the natural environment, and all human activities have an impact on the environment.

Decision-makers increasingly consider these interrelationships in their decisions on new growth and development. An ecosystem approach to planning would recognize, for example, the linkages between agricultural practices and the natural environment.

As another example, watershed planning bases decisions on the major watershed drainage areas. Watersheds often cross political boundaries. Therefore watershed planning requires co-operation and integration among different jurisdictions and agencies. Agriculture both relies on and affects the quality and quantity of water resources.

A broader focus for the expression of provincial interest in agricultural land could look at countryside or rural issues. Such an approach could address issues related to natural resources, cultural heritage, recreation, habitat protection, and the rural economy and community. This approach links agricultural land protection to other rural development concerns.

Such a policy statement would encompass the issue of rural community development. Agriculture is often an important part of the economic and social systems of rural communities. Developing policies on agricultural land use in the context of rural community development policies recognizes and reinforces the linkages between agriculture and the rural economy and community. A rural focused policy statement includes policies for various resource sectors. It addresses the connections and conflicts in the use of resources.

These broader approaches to a policy statement consider agricultural land use in relation to other uses, resources and issues. The examples above outline several ways of having a more integrated expression of provincial interest in agricultural land and other resources.

Legislation

Legislation can also be used to express provincial interests. Legislation could be drafted in any of the ways outlined under the discussion of policy statements. However, new legislation also allows for the definition of new processes for decision-making and approvals.

Basically, legislation is stronger than policy statements in terms of requirements and enforcement. Policy statements under the Planning Act are generally more flexible in their interpretation and implementation. A more specific comparison of the two policy tools would depend on the specific wording of the legislation or policy statement.

British Columbia and Quebec have single-focus legislation. In establishing systems of agricultural reserves, these provinces have focused on agricultural land use only. (These reserves are described more fully in Part III, under "Commission.") In both provinces, the governments placed prime agricultural lands in reserves. This had the effect of zoning at the provincial level. A commission administers the system, protecting agricultural uses from conflicting uses.

The State of Oregon provides a working example of a broader focus for legislation. The State has defined goals concerning development, land use, environmental and natural resource issues. As part of the implementation of its legislation, the State identified prime agricultural land, established an exclusive farm use zone, and defined permitted and prohibited uses. The goals for agriculture are co-ordinated with the goals for other issues. Municipalities must comply with all State goals in their plans and planning decisions.

Discussion questions on tools to express Provincial interest:

What form should an agricultural land protection program in Ontario take? Should it be expressed as a policy statement or legislation? Why?

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Options also exist for defining the provincial and municipal roles and responsibilities in an agricultural land protection program. There are several components in which the various levels of government could be involved: goal setting; policy development; policy implementation; setting standards; research and education; and monitoring implementation

of the policies. For each of these components, the responsibility of the province or municipality may vary from no involvement to total responsibility, to some sharing or division of responsibility. The degree of involvement of each level of government may vary in several ways.

Variations may occur as a result of the specific characteristics of the agricultural land base in the municipality or as a result of increasingly responsible land use decision-making by a municipality.

The following are examples of how responsibilities may be varied according to the agricultural base. Municipalities with predominantly marginal agricultural areas may have responsibility for day-to-day implementation with the Province acting only in a monitoring capacity. Municipalities with predominantly prime agricultural areas, however, may have the responsibility to implement specific policies to protect the land resources and agricultural operations. Alternatively, where a unique resource area exists, like specialty crop lands, the Province may choose to be more involved in implementing its policies.

Variation according to increasingly responsible decision-making may include provisions for delegating more approval responsibility to the municipality in light of sophisticated review processes and appropriate implementation of provincial interests. In other municipalities, the Province may take a more active role in planning decisions related to agriculture.

The Province might also be involved at only certain stages of the planning process. For instance, the Province might only be involved in official plan preparation and review. Implementation of the official plan policies through zoning by-laws, severances, and so on, could be left to the municipality.

Depending on the focus of the policy statement or legislation, municipalities may have more responsibility for policy development and implementation. Under a rural community development focus for policies, the development of policies and solutions to issues at the local level would be important.

The division of roles and responsibilities can be expressed in an approach for implementation. Three options for an implementation approach for an agricultural land protection program are presented below. Each approach affects, differently, the "tone" of the agricultural land protection policy as well as describes the relationship and roles of the different levels of government.

In summary, the three models presented are:

- *centralized approach*, whereby the Province provides detailed direction of what lands are to be protected and how this is accomplished;
- a *decentralized approach*, whereby general goals are established by the Province and policy development and implementation are carried out by municipalities; and
- a *locally specific approach*, whereby differing roles can be set out for the Province and municipalities, depending on specific issues.

Centralized approach

Under a centralized approach, the role and responsibilities of the Province are pre-eminent. Goal setting, policy development and policy implementation are all the primary responsibilities of the Province. These responsibilities are frequently ensured through provincial approval of most development proposals.

A centralized approach is most often reflected in province-wide application of policies to all participants in land use planning. Similar standards and expectations are applied to all land owners and developments.

The responsibility of municipalities, as partners under a centralized approach, is often limited to approval of minor activities or to providing information supporting positions or applications.

Decentralized approach

Under this approach, the province would provide general goals for Ontario's agricultural lands. Basically, the goals are general, although for some issues details may be provided in the goal. Provincial activities under this approach may include a passive provincial role in making the goals generally known or an active provincial role ensuring that the goals to be implemented. In both of these activities, however, the provincial focus is on goals rather than specific implementation policies and requirements.

Information and support is provided by the Province to help municipal implementation. Monitoring of implementation activity, however, would generally be the responsibility of the Province. In cases where established criteria or previously agreed-upon goals were not being met, the Province would take some remedial action, such as withdrawing development approval authority or witholding some funds.

A prominent role for upper tier municipalities (ie. county, district or regional municipalities) defines the municipal responsibility under the decentralized approach. Working with the Province, the upper tier municipality adapts provincial interests (as expressed in provincial goals) to the municipality.

This approach provides for the identification of agricultural lands, protection of the lands and support of the agricultural community by the municipal government. All day-to-day implementation of the provincial interest in agricultural land is the responsibility of the municipal government.

Locally Specific approach

Under the locally specific approach, as under the other approaches, provincial interest in agricultural land is declared by the Province. Provincial goals for agricultural land protection, as well as basic policy requirements for meeting those goals, are established at the outset.

Responsibility for implementing the goals and policies can be varied according to the specific situation. Variation may occur as a result of the specific characteristics of the agricultural land base in the municipality or as a result of increasingly responsible land use decision-making by a municipality.

As an example of variation according to agricultural base, municipalities with predominantly marginal agricultural areas may have responsibility for day-to-day implementation with the Province acting only in a monitoring capacity. Municipalities with predominantly prime agricultural areas, however, may have the responsibility to implement specific policies to protect the land resources and agricultural operations.

Variation according to increasingly responsible decision-making may include provisions for delegating more approval responsibility to the municipality in light of sophisticated review processes and appropriate implementation of provincial interests.

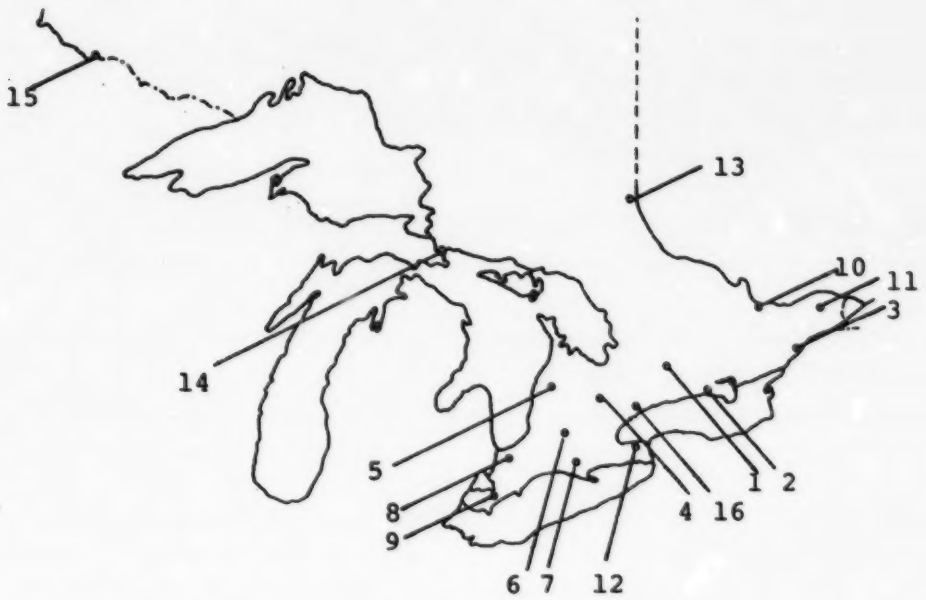
Discussion questions on roles and responsibilities:

What responsibilities should the Province have to protect provincially significant agricultural land?

What responsibilities should municipalities have to protect provincially significant agricultural land? Are there different responsibilities for upper tier municipalities than lower tier municipalities?

Which approach might best protect agricultural land?

APPENDIX A: SCHEDULE OF PUBLIC MEETINGS



	DATE	LOCATION
1	May 19, 1992	Ops Community Centre Highway 7, (2.5 km east of Highway 35) **Ops Township**
2	May 20, 1992	Knights of Columbus Hall 57 Stella Crescent **Trenton**
3	May 21, 1992	Spring Valley Community Centre Highway 29 North (just outside of Brockville) **Brockville**
4	May 27, 1992	Centre Dufferin Recreation Complex Highway 10 North (on the north side of town) **Shelburne**
5	May 28, 1992	Formosa Community Centre **Formosa** (southwest of Walkerton, off Highway 9)

6	June 2, 1992	Sebringville Community Centre Huron Road **Sebringville**
7	June 3, 1992	Royal Canadian Legion 16 Durham Street **Tillsonburg**
8	June 4, 1992	Royal Canadian Legion Hall 493 Erie Street **Wyoming**
9*	June 8, 1992	Blue Bonnet Restaurant Highway 2 (12 Mill Street West) **Tilbury**
10	June 10, 1992	Arnprior Civic Centre 77 James Street **Arnprior**
11*	June 11, 1992	Casselman Cambridge Community Centre 138 Brebeuf Street **Casselman**
12	June 15, 1992	Beacon Motor Inn 2793 North Service Road (north of the QEW, interchange 55) **Jordan Station**
13*	June 18, 1992	New Liskeard College of Agricultural Technology Highway 11B **New Liskeard**
14*	June 22, 1992	MacLennan Hall MacLennan Road (1 mile north of Highway 17, east of Sault Ste. Marie) **Desbarats**
15	June 24, 1992	Red Dog Inn 700 Stewart Street **Fort Frances**
16	June 29, 1992	Ramada Hotel Airport West 5444 Dixie Road **Mississauga**

All public meetings will start at 7:30 pm.

* French language services will be available.